

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ET, FR
SUBJECT: LE MONDE ARTICLE ON SEPARATISM IN ETHIOPIA

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED:

1. LE MONDE OF SEPTEMBER 21 CARRIES FRONT PAGE ARTICLE FROM ADDIS, SIGNED BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JEAN-CLAUDE GUILLEBAUD, TITLED "SERIOUS THREAT OF SEPARATISM HANGS OVER NORTH OF ETHIOPIA". ARTICLE DESCRIBES FEAR OF ADDIS OFFICIALS ABOUT SEPARATIST ACTION IN ERITREA AND TIGRE AND MAKES A NUMBER OF ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT.

2. GUILLEBAUD SAYS THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ARE HAUNTED BY SEPARATISM "SUPPORTED BY A FOREIGN POWER... THE EXPRESSION COMHJNLY EMPLOYED TO DESIGNATE THE U.S.". HE QUOTES AN UNNAMED ETHIOPIAN AS SAYING, "NO ONE CONTESTS TODAY THAT AMERICA PLAYED THE MAKONNEN CARD LAST MARCH AND LOST. IN THE SAME WAY, IT IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE THAT THE AMERICANS ARE TRYING THIS TIME TO MANIPULATE THE DISSIDENTS OF TIGRE AND THE DANAKILS TO

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PROVIDE AGAINST AN EVENTUAL SLIPPAGE TO THE LEFT IN

ETHIOPIA."

3. GUILLEBAUD SAYS SUCH CHARGES DO NOT SEEM TO BE OBSESSIONS OR BASELESS OPINIONS. IN DESCRIBING THE "REBELLION" OF SULTAN ALI MIRAH AND RAS MENGESHA SEYOUM' HE POINTEDLY CLAIMS THAT "ALI MIRAH MADE A 45-DAY VISIT TO THE U.S. SOME WEEKS AGO ON THE INVITATION OF WASHINGTON".

4. THE AUTHOR PLACES MENGESHA'S ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF ERITREA'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE RED SEA-INDIAN OCEAN AREA AND SAYS THEY ARE THUS LIKELY "TO TEMPT AMERICAN (SECRET) SERVICES". HE SAYS THAT WHILE KAGNEW HAS LOST ALL ITS IMPORTANCE AS "A CENTER FOR ELECTRONIC INTELLIGENCE, IT IS IN THE PROCESS OF BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A NAVAL BASE AND THUS MAINTAINS ALL OF ITS STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE".

5. GUILLEBAUD CONCLUDES BY ASSERTING THAT THESE "GREAT MANEUVERS" PREOCCUPY PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND THAT THIS "WORKING HYPOTHESIS" IS ACCEPTED BY SOME INTELLIGENCE AGENTS IN ADDIS. HE IMPLIES THAT THE QUESTION PUT TO STUDENTS WHO DEMONSTRATED FOR THE EMPEROR, "WHO PAID YOU?", CAN BE ANSWERED, THE U.S."
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COMMENT: RECENT REVELATIONS ABOUT CIA ACTIVITIES IN CHILE HAVE PUT LE MONDE AND ITS READERS IN A FRAME OF MIND TO ACCEPT WITH LITTLE QUESTION ALMOST ANY CLAIM, HOWEVER BASELESS, OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER COUNTRIES' AFFAIRS. INFORMATION TO REFUTE GUILLEBAUD'S ALLEGATIONS WOULD BE HELPFUL. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
IRWIN

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